

Pharisaism revived in Popery.

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S E R M O N

PREACHED September the 29th, at the
Parish-Church of FRYERN BARNET:

A N D

October the 13th, 1745, at Highgate Chapel,
MIDDLESEX,

By B. LIPTROTT.



L O N D O N:

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. MATTH. v. 20.

*Except your Righteousness shall exceed
the Righteousness of the Scribes and
Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter
into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

AS the Motives which the Gospel proposes to our Consideration are the most perswasive, the most prevalent to engage the Attention of Beings that are capable of being influenced by Hopes or Fears, so are it's Precepts the most excellent and pure, tending to the Improvement and Perfection of our Natures, and wisely adapted to us, as reasonable Creatures. The Rewards which it promises to our Obedience, are no less than everlasting Happiness in Heaven, and the Qualifications requisite to entitle us thereto, are such pious Affections, and Habits of Soul, as become Inhabitants of such blessed Regions, inward Purity and Holiness.—Almost every Page in the New Testament inculcates the indispensable Necessity of this. The Pattern which is proposed for our Imitation is faultless and unblameable. The ^a Captain of our Salvation, our great ^b Forerunner, who in our Nature is entered into the Heavens, there to take Possession in our

Stead, hath pointed out the Way for us, and
 & left us an Example, that we should follow
 his Steps, who did no Sin, neither was Guile
 found in his Mouth.—If we would enter
 with him into the promised Possession, we
 must be ^a Partakers of his Holiness.—If we
 would secure our Interest in Christ as our Sa-
 viour, we must maintain an Union with him
 as our Head, we must be ingrafted into him
 by his ^c Spirit, and if the ^f Root be holy so
 ought also the Branches;—If we would
 leap in Glory hereafter, we must first sow in
 Righteousness here, and bring forth our ^g Fruit
 unto Holiness.—If we would plead the glo-
 rious ^h Privilege of being adopted Sons with
 Christ, and Joint-Heirs ⁱ with him, we must
 evidence the Seal of our Adoption, by con-
 forming ourselves to the Will of our Hea-
 venly Father, and ^k walk as he also walked;
 who was obedient in all Things. ^{et hoc quod si}
 If we would be acknowledged by him in the
 last Day as his People, we must ^l depart here
 from Iniquity. This last Passage of Scripture
 is so very express, that it excludes all Preten-
 sions whatsoever to the Salvation of Christ,
 which Men are vainly apt to depend upon, un-
 less supported by real Holiness, by ^m keeping
 the Commandments: A bare Faith in Christ,
 will give us no Claim, not though it were ⁿ
 strong enough, as St Paul assures us, to re-
 move Mountains, and our Saviour says why
 call

^e 1 Pet. ii. 21. ^d Heb. xii. 10. ^e Rom. viii. 9. Joh.
 xv. 4 ^f Rom. xi. 16. ^g Ibid. vi. 22. ^h Joh. i. 12.
ⁱ Rom. viii. 17. ^k 1 Joh. ii. 6. ^l Matt. vii. 25.
^m Matt. xix. 17. ⁿ 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things, which I say, why do you profess to believe in me as your Lord, and Saviour, and refuse Obedience to my Commands : No high Attainments in Knowledge and Learning, nor great natural Endowments, though we could ^o speak with the Tongues of Men, and of Angels ; nor the extraordinary, and supernatural Powers of the Spirit, though we should arrive at ^p prophesying in his Name, and in his Name were able to do many wonderful Works ; yet these outward Indications of the Spirit would stand us in no stead*, unless accompanied with his sanctifying Graces within, for except we listen to his Holy Suggestions in our Souls, obey his Dictates in being ^q renewed in the Spirit of our Minds ; ^r except we be born again, and be ^s converted, and, as to Guile and Malice, become as little Children, except we ^t crucify the Flesh, with it's Affections and Lusts, *except our Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes, and Pharisees, we shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

In

^o 1 Cor. xiii. 1. ^p Matt. vii. 22.

* The Spirit of God in Prophecy came upon *Sam'* and *Balaam*, ^z Pet. ii. 15. who loved the Wages of Unrighteousness. The Spirit of God came mightily upon *Sampson* in endowing him with supernatural Power for the Deliverance of his People ; and the Spirit of Wisdom rested on *Aabitophel*, ^z Sam. 16. 28. Thus it manifested itself in these Men as the Spirit of Power, their moral Characters were far from being justifiable, their Examples unfit for our Imitation, and their Ends deplorable ; but then only when it rests upon Men as the Spirit of Holiness, is it the Seal and Earnest of their Adoption.

^q Ephes. iv. 23. ^r Joh. iii. 3. ^s Matt. xviii. 3.
^t Gal. v. 24.

In discoursing upon these Words, I shall first of all shew wherein the Scribes and Pharisees made their Righteousness to consist.

Secondly, Draw a Parallel between these ancient Doctors in the Jewish, and their modern Followers in the Christian Church.

Thirdly, Shew wherein that Gospel-Righteousness does consist, that will gain us Admission into the Kingdom of Heaven, and then conclude with a proper Application.

It is not material here to enter into a long and critical Enquiry who these Scribes and Pharisees were, or when they first sprung up, whom our Saviour reproves with so much Bitterness, and brands with such odious Characters; let it be sufficient to observe, " That the Scribes were the principal Officers and Doctors in the Jewish Law, whose Business it was to write and interpret the Scriptures ; as there is no mention of them before the Times of *Ezra*, probably they were first instituted by the Jews, after their Return from the Babylonish Captivity upon the ceasing of Prophecy. The Pharisees were a noted Sect amongst them, so called, as the Etymology of the Name imports, because separated as it were from the rest, by their professing a greater Show of Holiness, and a more religious Observance of the Law. They were in the highest Esteem among the Jews in our Saviour's Time, they were the Fathers of Tradition, and their Doctrines were put upon a Level with the written Word of God." But God seeth not as

Man

Man seeth, his Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, he judgeth not from outward Appearances but from the inward Dispositions, and Sincerity of the Heart; and if that be corrupt, or influenced by selfish and worldly Views, or any other Motives, than the Fear, and Love of him, rejects with Scorn and Indignation all external acts of Religion, for whatsoever of this Kind may be highly approved of by Men, is Abomination in the Sight of God. And such was the Righteousness wherein the Scribes and Pharisees trusted, which met with the highest Applause from Men, but which our Saviour condemns as ineffectual to Salvation.

First it aimed at a wrong End, the Esteem and Praise of Men, but not that of God. All their Works they did, says our Saviour, for to be seen of Men. It is one Thing to let Men see our good Works, with this Intent, that they may be induced to imitate them, and thereby glorify our Father which is in Heaven; another Thing to do them only to be seen of Men, out of Ostentation and Vain-Glory, to gain their empty Applause and Admiration.—Under this Head is to be ranked their Pageantry in distributing their Alms in their Synagogues, in the most open and publick Places,—the recital of the Shema, their Daily Prayers, in the Markets and the Corners of the Streets—the publishing their frequent Fastings and Mortifications to the World, by appearing abroad in a neglected mournful Dress, and a disfigured Countenance. Thus they endeavoured to keep up a Form of Godliness in external Acts, at the same

same Time that they refused to admit the Power of it into their Hearts.—Hence sprung their Singularity in wearing their Phylacteries broader than others, and of enlarging the Borders of their Garments ; not out of any Respect, or Religious Veneration for the Law, that they might become great in the Sight of God, but in the Eyes of Men, that they might procure, thereby, Honour and Respect, the uppermost Rooms at Feasts, and the chief Seats in the Synagogues, Homage and Reverence when they appeared in Publick, and the honourable Appellations of Rabbi, Master, Father.—They made long and frequent Prayers, with Design only to impose upon the Weak and Unwary, and under a Shew of being devout Religious Men, to devour more easily Widows Houses.—

To this same Principle of Vain-Glory must we ascribe their great Zeal, which they pretended to have for Religion, but it was only to support their own Party, and to found their own Praise more extensively, that they compassed Sea and Land to make one Proselyte.—And as their Righteousness was faulty, in that it was influenced by wrong Motives, and pursued false Ends ; so was it farther blameable, in that it was sometimes defective, and did not extend to the whole Law of God, at other times redundant and launched out into Superstition. Under a Pretence of being the sole Interpreters of the Scriptures, they took away the Key of Knowledge from the People. They perverted the several Passages relating to the expected Messiah, by imposing upon them

them a Sense suited to their Notions of temporal Wealth, and worldly Grandeur ; thereby shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men, for they neither entered in themselves, neither suffered they those that were entering to go in. At other times by their false Glosses, and casuistical nice Distinctions, they expounded away the plain Intent and Meaning of the Scriptures, and rendered the Word of God by this Means of none Effect. Thus, in a great Measure, they expunged the third Commandment, when they taught that Men might safely swear by the Creatures, and though they should violate their Oaths, escape the Guilt of Perjury ; that if a Man swore by the Temple, or by the Altar, it was nothing, but if by the Gold of the Temple, or the Gift upon the Altar, he was bound, that is he was obliged, to keep his Oath. By these knavish Evasions they granted Men a Licence to transgress the Commandment, only they endeavoured to imprint a greater Veneration for the Gifts and Offering of the Temple, for mere filthy Lucre's Sake. — But as if it was not sufficient to evade the Commandments by such equivocal Subterfuges, they erected a more formidable Battery, the more effectually to curb and restrain the Power of the written Word, and that under a Pretence of securing and defending it ; I mean their Oral Law, the Traditions of their Elders, which they made to be of equal Authority with the Written Law ; nay often adhered to it in direct Opposition to the Commandment of God ; a remarkable Instance of which, with

Regard to the fifth Commandment our Saviour mentions, *Matth. xv. 4.* God said, Honour thy Father and Mother. Respect and reverence thy Parents, submit thyself to them, and if they are necessitous support and assist them, according to thy Power. But, on the contrary, their Masters of Tradition taught, whosoever shall say to his Father or his Mother, *Corban*, that is, it is a Gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his Father or his Mother, he shall be free ; That is whosoever shall bind himself by a rash Oath, not to relieve the Necessities of his Parents ; or vow to give to some pious Use, what should otherwise have been laid out in their Relief and Support, shall be free from any Obligation of Duty to his Parents.

But however by these Artifices their Righteousness was defective, and fell short of the weightier Matters of the Law, of fulfilling the Duties of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith ; yet it must be confessed, that in lesser Matters they were scrupulously exact, and rigorously insisted on more than what was expressly commanded. They strained at a Gnat, at the same Time that they swallowed a Camel ; in trivial Things, that did not intrench upon their Pride, their Covetousness, or no ways contradicted their beloved Lusts, they were righteous above the Precept ; witness their superstitious washings of Cups and Vessels, their frequent Lustrations, for fear of being defiled, whilst they neglected to cleanse and purify the Heart, from whence must come every Thing that can defile

file the Man ; their frivolous Rules as to the Form and Make of their Phylacteries before-mentioned ; their voluntary Fasts, and paying Tythes of the most minute Things, such as Mint, Anise, and Cummin, which it was doubtful, whether they were enjoined by the Law or no. But to compleat their Hypocrisy, while they build up the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the Righteous, while they seem to condemn, and endeavour to atone for the Wickedness of their Forefathers in killing God's holy Prophets, by honouring their Relicks with stately Monuments, at the same Time they are implacably bent upon persecuting and murthering their living Successors. The meek, the humble, pious, and innocent Deportment of the Holy *Jesus*, so visibly upbraided their proud haughty and supercilious Behaviour ; the intrinsic Excellency and Purity of the Doctines which he taught, as well as the Authority with which he delivered them to the People, were such a glaring Reproach upon their dull lifeless Forms, their painted outside Shew of Godliness, that at all Events they were resolved to remove the hated Object from their Sight, as unfit to live ; and accordingly, to fill up the Measure of the Iniquity of their Forefathers, they crucified the Lord of Glory.—No Wonder then, as the Disciple is not above his Master, that they breathed out Threatening and Slaughter against his Followers, pursued them from City to City, and persecuted them even unto Death. Piety, when dormant and silent in the Grave,

gives no Offence ; but whilst alive, is always the Object of Malice, and Persecution to Hypocrites, and superstitious Men.

That it was not without good Grounds, that our blessed Saviour passed such severe and harsh Censures upon the Scribes and Pharisees, their own Writings will abundantly justify him *. It would be an easy Matter to confirm every Particular which he charges upon them out of their own Oral Law ; which as they pretend was given by God himself to *Moses* upon Mount *Sinai*, at the same Time with the written Law, and was handed down by Tradition to *Joshua*, from him to the Elders, so to the Judges, and from one Generation to another, till the Destruction of the second Temple ; when, after the Dispersion of the Jews, for fear it should be lost, it was committed to writing by *Rabbi Juda* in a Book intituled the *Misna* ; the *Gemaras*, or Interpretations, of which has been since swelled into many large Volumes by their *Talmudic* Writers. But as this would be not only an unnecessary Task, but unpleasant to a Christian Audience, I shall wave it with this general Observation, that had our Saviour charged them falsely with invalidating and mutilating the Word of God by their vain Traditions, how easy would it have been for them to have cleared themselves from the Imputation, by denying that they maintained any such Doctrines ; how easy to have persuaded their Posterity,

* See *Walton's Miscellaneous Discourses relating to the Traditions and Usages of the Scribes and Pharisees.*

Posterity, that the Account given of them in the Gospel was false and unjust, by vamping a-new their traditionary Laws, and expunging those, which had been condemned by our Saviour ; but when the Pourtrait they give of themselves in the *Misna*, tallies so exactly with the Character recorded of them in the Gospel, when above one Hundred Years after, the same Tenets are committed to writing, the same Usages religiously observed, and the same Principles avowed even at this Day ; what a standing Monument is this of their obstinate vile Hypocrisy, and a strong Confirmation to us, from the Mouth of an Adversary of the Truth of the Gospel.

But is Hypocrisy in Religion solely of the Growth of the Land of *Judea*? — Is it a Weed that only overspread, and choaked the good Seed the Word of God under the Mosaic Dispensation? — Or are Impositions of human Doctrines, instead of the Commandments of God, a substituting of Will-Worship, and our own Righteousness, instead of the Righteousness of God, only criminal in the Scribes and Pharisees? — Nay ; but as in every Nation they that fear him, and work *his* Righteousness are accepted by him, so the formal Hypocrite, that rests in the Externals of Religion, that contents himself with a Form of Godliness, and denies the Power of it in his Life and Conversation, of whatever Communion, under whatever Dispensation, will his Soul abhor, after such dreadful Woes denounced in the Gospel against the Scribes and Pharisees ; does

does it not merit our Amazement that any of their Leaven should be found amongst those who stile themselves Christians, nay, who would, exclusive of all others, arrogate to themselves that high and glorious Title ; and yet whoever does but attentively read over the Twenty-third Chapter of St *Mattbeu's* and the Eleventh of St *Luke's* Gospel, will not be long at a Loss to point out a modern Copy to that old Original ; the Pourtraits are so alike, that he will be apt to think the Denunciations therein contained were not so much designed against Errors, that then existed in the *Jewish*, as Prophetical, and by way of Terror levelled against the like Corruptions, which should afterwards be introduced into the Christian Church. The Conformity between Pagan and Christian *Rome* has been already exposed by a late Writer, with respect to it's Rites and Ceremonies ; and if we compare the Doctrines, by which the Church of *Rome* stands distinguished from others of the Christian Profession, to those of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall find as surprising a Resemblance ; not that I believe the one copied after the other, but that they are both Originals in their Kind, and that the Likeness between them arises from the same depraved Principles of human Nature, which tired of proceeding on in the strait and rugged Paths of Piety, and moral Virtues, the high Road to Heaven, is apt to strike out to itself easier Ways, in Compliance with it's own corrupt Inclinations.

Did

Did the Scribes and Pharisees pride themselves in being Descendants of the Stock of *Abraham*, *Mattb.* iii. 9. no less do these in being the Successors of *St Peter*, and would exclude all from a Possibility of being saved, who are not of their Communion : But as they only were to be accounted the genuine Seed of *Abraham*, that did his Works, and God, if he had so pleased, even from Stocks, and Stones, could have raised up Children unto *Abraham*; so supposing these latter could make out their lineal Descent without interruption from *St Peter*, it would avail them nothing, without at the same Time they could evidence in their Lives and Doctrines, the Examplariness and Soundness of that great Apostle.

The Scribes and Pharisees laid the whole Stress of their Religion in outward Observances, and does not modern Hypocrisy wear the same Garb, and tread in the same Steps : They made broad their Phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their Garments ; they fasted twice in the Week, distributed their Alms in Public, made many and long Prayers, and reckoned it a Sin to neglect the Recital of the Shema Morning and Evening ; so these rely upon the *Opus Operatum*, they teach that their Works are meritorious, and can lay up a Stock of Merits for the Church ; have multiplied their religious Orders, distinguished by the Singularity of their several fantastical Habits ; enjoined the Observance of frequent Fasts, and abstaining from particular Meats ; the Repe-tition of so many Daily Prayers, so many *Ave Marias*,

Marias, so many *PaterNosters*; and however immoral otherwise Men may be, yet if they comply with the Injunctions of the Church, and submit to her Penance, which generally consists in the Labour of the Lips, in repeating Prayers in an unknown Tongue, or bodily Chastisements, the pretended Vicar of Christ has Store of Pardons, Absolutions, and Indulgences, which he never fails to grant out of the Plenitude of his Apostolical Power to any, but those, who are not able to purchase them; and if Men bequeath their Alms liberally to the Church, but in their last Moments, none need despair, they have still in Reserve Masses for the Dead. That no Wonder one of their own Popes, considering how miserably they have defaced the Gospel by their vain Additions, and Superstructure, should cry out *Quanti nobis profuit hæc de Christo fabula?* How gainful to us has this Fable of Christ been? It must be the real Sense of the Generality of their Doctors and learned Men, would they but as ingenuously declare their inward Sentiments.

The Pharisees of old were distinguished for their frequent Washings, and Cleansings of Cups and Vessels; their modern Followers, for their Crossings, and Sprinklings with Holy Water, not only of Men but Horses and other Animals.—They compassed Sea and Land to make one Profelyte; and what Disguises, what Forms, will not a Papist appear in, to allure the Unwary into their Perswasion? The Scribes and Pharisees took away the Key of

of Knowledge, they locked up the Scriptures from the People, under a Pretence of having the sole Right of interpreting them ; in like Manner have the *Romanists* denied the People the Use of the Scriptures, they have for many Ages kept them sealed up in an unknown Tongue ; and when at the Dawn of the Reformation, they could not any longer restrain them from the Perusal of them, (after they came to be translated into the Vulgar Tongue) they endeavoured by false Glosses *, and a corrupt Translation, to make them speak the Sense of their Church, and to patronize their Superstitions, and idolatrous Usages. Our Saviour censures the Scribes and Pharisees for vacating the Commandments by their Gasuistical nice Distinctions. And do not Papists by the same Kind of Sophistry evade the Commandments of God, nay, in great Measure expunge the Precepts of both Testaments. Thus by distinguishing where the Gospel has made no Distinction, between *Artefacta* and *Natura*, the Worship that is due to the Supreme Being, and an inferior Kind of Worship, which, as they pretend, ought to be paid to Saints and Angels, they have quite discarded the second Commandment, that they may pay to Creatures, to mere Stocks and Stones, that Homage, which is due only to the Creator God blessed for ever. Whilst they teach that Faith is not to be kept with Heretics (that is with those,

* See the Rhemish Translation. See also a Treatise entitled, *Papery an Enemy to Scripture.*

who in the Way, which they call Heresy, are perswaded that so ought they to worship the God of their Fathers) and that all, who would approve themselves true Catholicks, should endeavour to root them out with Fire and Sword.

— That Princes excommunicated by the Pope, may be lawfully dethroned ; do they not open a wide Door to the blackest of Crimes, such as Perjury, Lying and Dissimulation, Fraud, Violence, Sedition, Rebellion, Murder, Massacres, and Assassinations ? Do they not set Men loose from all the Duties of Justice, and Charity, which they owe to their Neighbour, and which the Christian Religion so forcibly inculcates and requires from us even to our very Enemies ? That I do not misrepresent them in order to raise your Indignation and Abhorrence, consult the Annals of most Nations in Europe, and you will find that their Practice and Actions have always been consonant and agreeable to these Principles ; one was condemned by them to the Flames as being a Heretic, after he had been solemnly invited to intrust his Person in their Power, and the publick Faith given for his safe Return. Kings and Emperors have been divested of their Authority, and obliged by their rebellious Subjects, (who have withdrawn their Allegiance at the Instigation of the Pope's Bulls,) to sue in the most abject Postures at the Feet of these insolent Usurpers, for the Restitution of their Power and Dignity.

General Massacres have been encouraged, and openly

openly avowed ; witness that dismal Slaughter of the chief of the Hugonots assembled at *Paris*, and invited thither under the shew of Friendship, and an entire Reconciliation, witness the intended Blast, that was designed by these Workers in Darkness against the Estates of this Realm assembled in Parliament ; witness the more successful Execution of their Malice, in the Destruction of so many Thousand Protestant Families in *Ireland*, in the Reign of King *Charles the First*. And where their Power has not been so prevalent, when the *Bruta Fulmina* of their Popes have not met with that blind, implicit Obedience, nor struck that Dread and Awe into the Subject, then have they had recourse to secret Treachery, and employed the daring Hand of the nightly Ruffian, who has accomplished their wicked Designs by the Stabs of the concealed Dagger. But to return :

Did the Pharisees maintain their Oral Law to be of equal Authority with the written Word of God ; so have others since them, maintained the Traditions of the Church, nay set them up above the Scriptures ; from whence, as from an Arsenal big with Instruments of Destruction, have they drawn their most destructive Artillery, and levelled it against true Piety, and real Christianity. From hence alone, without any Warrant from Scripture, have they set up their Idol Mediators ; and established their Image-Worship, Adoration, and Invocation of Saints and Angels,

Service in an unknown Tongue, Communion in one Kind, and from hence alone have they drawn their lucrative Doctrines concerning Papal Indulgences, Pardons, Dispensations, and such like.

Lastly, Did the Scribes and Pharisees adorn the Tombs and Sepulchres of the Prophets, and righteous Men, who laid down their Lives in Attestation of the Truth, and at the same Time persecuted their living Successors ; so who are they, who are most scrupulously exact in Observance of Holy Days set apart in Memory of Apostles, Martyrs, and Confessors ? who are they, who pay a superstitious Veneration to Shrines and Relicks of departed Saints, and pursue at the same Time with Rancour and Malice the living ? — If a formal outward Behaviour, if Show and Pageantry without, a Spirit of Cruelty and Persecution within, be the certain Marks of the true Church, then has the Church of *Rome* ample Credentials to produce in it's Favour ; she has in this Nation wrote the Spirit which she breaths in plain and bloody Characters, and has never failed to do the like wherever she has had Opportunity, and the Bowels of Nature in the Executioners of her Wrath have not recoiled again ; for the tender Mercies of the Proud are cruel.

Having thus shewn negatively, what will not be sufficient to gain us Admission into Heaven, it remains that I shew, wherein that Righteousness does consist that will entitle us

to

to it. But here I would not be understood to mean, as if by our own Righteousness or any Works, that we can do, we could merit, so as to lay a just Claim to the Happiness of Heaven as our Right, a Debt of Due ; but only upon what Terms God has graciously promised to accept returning Sinners, as fit Objects of his Mercy through *Jesus Christ*.— Sinners I say, for under this Denomination is every Descendant of the fallen *Adam*, that was ever born into the World, to be considered. The sole meritorious Cause of the Remission of Sin, of our Justification, and Salvation consequent thereupon is the Sacrifice of *Christ*; the Means, or Instrument, whereby the Merits of this grand Atonement are applied to each of us in particular, is Faith in him. In this Phrase is the Condition of our Salvation usually expressed in Scripture, thus—*Believe and thou shalt be saved*—*By Grace ye are saved through Faith*—*By Faith ye are justified*. But lest Men should be induced to think that nothing more was intended hereby than a formal Assent of the Understanding, a mere speculative Belief; the Phrase in other parallel Places of Scripture is varied, and enlarged, and it is described by it's Effects, to be that inward Principle, that will influence the Will and Affections; to be such a * Faith, as is consummated, or made perfect in Love, such a Faith as will be productive of a new Life, will be active and lively

* Compare together 1-Cor. vii. 19. Gal. vi. 15. Ibid. v. 6.

lively in the renewing of our Natures, so as to render us new Creatures; such a Faith as will powerfully incline us to Obedience, and keeping the Commandments of God. The Righteousness of Faith then consists in a sincere universal, unreserved Obedience to all God's Laws. Sincere, I say, because an unsincere Obedience is above the Attainment of Man in his fallen Estate. Absolute Perfection is the sole Property of that supreme Being, who chargeth even his Angels with Folly, and in whose Sight the very Heavens, the highest Order of Seraphs are not clean, but still in the Gospel Sense we are commanded, in Proportion to the Powers and Capacities of our Nature, to be perfect as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect; that is, by way of Imitation, not Equality, we must aspire after Perfection in our Desires, and Endeavours, and must not allow ourselves wilfully and habitually in any known Sin, so as to let it get the Dominion over us, that we should obey it in the Lusts thereof.

As contraries set off each other, and dark Shades serve to render the Rays of Light more visible and conspicuous to the Eye; so the Character, which I have drawn at large of the formal Hypocrite will help to point out, and delineate more clearly, the Opposite one of the sincere Religious Christian. He will not content himself with mere Rites and Ceremonies, but offer unto God a reasonable Service, and worship him in Spirit and in Truth; the humblest

Posture

Posture of Adoration, the Prostration of the Body, he considers as mere mockery of God, unless proceeding from Humility, and Lowliness within. A Sense of his own Dependance, and the All-sufficiency of that supreme Being on whom he depends, will preserve his Mind in a constant Tenor of Deyotion, he will pray without ceasing ; but a vain Ostentation of long and frequent Prayers he will cautiously avoid, as empty Sounds and mere Jargon, unless offered up with Understanding, Attention, and Fervency of Soul. He will not depend on outward Professions of his Faith, but shew forth the Orthodoxy of his Opinions, by the Regularity of his Actions, by walking uprightly. Severe Mortifications, and bodily Austerities, will be no farther valuable in his Sight, than as Indications of a mortified contrite Spirit, and instrumental to keep the Body undefiled, in Temperance, Soborness, and Chastity. He aims not at the Praise of Men, and therefore in all his Religious Exercises, in the distributing of his Alms, he will endeavour to skreen himself from the Eye of the World ; being perswaded that though he should give his Body to be burned, though he should give all his Goods to feed the Poor, yet he would fail of his Reward hereafter, if he was influenced herein by a wrong Motive, and Charity was wanting within. He will love God with all his Heart, as a Being the most absolutely perfect and amiable, and he will fear to disobey, or offend him, as the only Being

Being that ought to be feared, who has all the Springs of Motion, all the Powers of Nature, at his Command to punish his Disobedience ; and because he fears him, therefore he will not be intimidated by the Menaces of Men to swerve from his Duty, as knowing that the Power of the Creature is circumscribed, and cannot exceed those Bounds which God has set it. He considers God as continually present about his Path, and about his Bed, and spying out all his Ways, as conscious and privy to the secret Transactions of his Breast, his most hidden Thoughts, therefore he endeavours to keep him always in Remembrance, and to preserve a due Reverence and Regard for him upon his Mind at all Times and in all Places, in the private Retirement of the Closet, as well as in the Face of the Congregation ; under the dark and silent Shades of the Night, when secreted from every Eye but that of his Maker, as well as when exposed to View amidst Crouds and Circles in open Day. He will keep himself far from Transgression, not only in outward Act, but even in Thought and Intention ; he not only will not steal, but also not covet what is another's. He will not commit Adultery, nor even indulge himself in unchaste Wishes nor wanton Desires. He will not be partial in his Obedience, but offer up to God the whole Man : He will not hope to deceive Heaven, and atone for wilful Transgressions of known Laws, by a reserved Compliance with others which

which he lies under no Temptation to transgress, nor think to commute for his darling Lusts by external Observances.

We have seen that Men may keep up a Form of Godliness, who are at the same Time the farthest removed from the Power of it. For who, in the Eye of the World, were in greater Repute for Sanctity and Holiness, than the Scribes and Pharisees; yet though they justified themselves in the Sight of Men, yet he who knew their Hearts pronounces them rotten and unclean within; and treats them with greater Asperity than he did the Sadducees, who denied a future State; he characterizes them under the harsh Appellations of Serpents, Generation of Vipers.

The general Use that may be drawn from hence is, That Men should be very cautious how they introduce Rites and Ceremonies into religious Worship. Generally speaking the more simple and fewer these are, with greater Decency and Devotion will the Service be performed; and a juster Notion of God and true Religion will be imprinted thereby on the Minds of the common People. For how indifferent soever these Things may be acknowledged by the first Imposers, they seldom fail in length of Time to multiply, and to be esteemed of necessary Obligation. The superstitious Usages amongst the Pharisees, which were so prodigiously increased in our Saviour's Time, arose from very small Beginnings, and probably from a good Design

in weak though well meaning Men. A notable Saying recorded of the chief Founder's of this Sect was, Let us set a Hedge about the Law, that Men might be kept far off from Transgression.

And if we enquire, we shall find that the Corruptions both in Doctrine and Worship, which have so miserably deformed the Christian Church, did not grow up all at once, but by a slow and gradual Increase in several Ages *. As in Individuals few have been known to have arrived at the highest Pitch of Wickedness on a sudden, without first passing through the lower Classes in the School of Vice. This Mystery of Iniquity began to work early, soon after the primitive Times, till by new Additions in every succeeding Age, it grew up at length to that enormous Size, in which we now behold it under the Denomination of Popery.

And this I think we may lay down as a sure Maxim, that mere human Ordinances unnecessarily multiplied, and imposed upon Men, have and always will in the End prove destructive to true Religion. Outward Forms have this Advantage above inward Sanctity, in that they make a Shew in the Flesh, and attract the Eyes of Men, and recommend themselves to the Depravity of human Nature, preferably to the harder Duties of Justice, Mercy, and Faith; it being much easier to bow the Knee, prostrate the Body, and purify the

the Hands, than to bow the stubborn Will, than to cleanse and purify the corrupt Affections of the Heart. By this Means they come to be esteemed the one Thing needful, like the lean Cattle in *Pharaoh's Dream* they devour the fat and well-favoured, eat out the Essentials of Religion, and leave it a mere empty shadow, a Body without a Soul.

The only unerring Standard whereby we ought to regulate our Doctrine, our Worship, and our Practice, is the Word of God, it is able, and it alone, *to make us wise unto Salvation*.—Would Men be perswaded to form their Religion according to this Plan, and not according to their own faulty Systems, Pharisical Pride, Rebellion, Cruelty, and Persecution, could never be recommended for Christian Virtues.—But if the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness. If Men wilfully shut their Eyes against the Light of the Scriptures, Experience has taught us, there are no Absurdities so contradictory to common Sense, no Impieties so heinous, nor Blasphemies so shocking, which Men have not run into under the Pretext of Religion. But I hope ye have not so learned Christ: Ye have not been taught to pay a blind implicit Obedience to any, nor to call any Man your Father or Master upon Earth, for one is your Master even Christ; You have not been taught to receive any Thing as an Article of Faith, but what is contained in or may be proved from the Scriptures; assert and main-

tain then this glorious Privilege of the Sons of God, of being only subject to his Will, as made known in the Scriptures ; and suffer not yourselves to be enslaved to weak and beggarly Elements, to be fettered by the Doctrines of Men. Esteem those sacred Volumes, and prize them highly, both upon the Account of their Divine Authority, as being the Oracles of the God of Truth ; and the Importance of their Contents, as making known to us the Way of Salvation. If at any Season our Veneration and Value for them should be enhanced, it is then, when we are in apparent Danger of being deprived of them.

Now that the Kings of the Earth stand up, and take Counsel together against us, those Sons of Violence, who have turned the rest of the World upside down with Havock, Slaughter, and Desolation, have at last let loose their Agents of Darkness upon us, and threaten us with spiritual Darkness, and Tyranny, worse than *Egyptian* Bondage ; let us manifest a just Sense of the Blessings we have enjoyed by making the utmost and most proper Efforts to preserve them.—But how weak and impotent are all the Efforts and Devices of Men, to defeat the Counsel of God. Evils befall not a Nation by Chance, neither do Calamities spring out of the Dust. There is an all-wise and just Being whose Providence rules, and directs every Thing here below, without whose Permission even a Sparrow falls not to the Ground ; and can we think that the momentous Affairs

of

of States and Kingdoms are exempted from his Cognizance, and Direction?—Second Causes are only Under-Agents, or rather the Instruments of his Hand. Whoever is conversant in Scripture, and knoweth not these Truths must be blind indeed.—That all Events are in the Disposal of God.—That he humbleth, or exalteth Nations, either as they forget his Ways, or keep them in Remembrance.

Let us then apply this Mirrour to our present Circumstances, and we cannot be at a Loss to discover his Hand who hath brought Distress, and Anguish upon us; the true Cause and Reason of his visiting us; and the most effectual Means of preventing our utter Ruin and Destruction.

Shall there then be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? But he doth not afflict nor grieve willingly the Children of Men; for the real Cause therefore we must look amongst ourselves, and that is no other, than our repeated Sins, and Provocations; for we have been a most rebellious People; ungrateful, unthankful for past Mercies; barren, and unfruitful under all the Means of Grace we have enjoyed: Therefore hath he let loose his sore Judgments upon us, if happily we will learn Righteousness, we have long heard the Thunder of his Wrath, but at a Distance; and have we in earnest endeavoured to disarm the Instruments of his Vengeance, by a sincere, and thorough Conversion to him? It is true we have for Years past had Days set apart for

Humilia-

Humiliation ; we have fasted and prayed, but it is to be feared not in such a Manner as he has required, for his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still, *Isaiah ix.* 12.— And where are the Effects of our Reformation ? Is the tremendous Name of God less blasphemed in our Streets ? are our Churches more crowded, except upon solemn Occasions for Fear of the Reproach and Censure of Men ? Have Lewdness, and Debau chery fewer Votaries ? Are Luxury and Extravagance less prevalent ? And are their natural Concomitants of Insolvency, Fraud, Rapine, and Violence, more seldom complained of amongst us ? Nay, (to the Shame of *Britain's* Sons be it spoken) since the devouring Sword has been permitted to approach our Borders, and our Country lies bleeding in the extreme Parts, have Assemblies for Diversion, and Places of Entertainment been less frequented ? These Considerations I own afford but a melancholy Prospect, and we may be assured that unless we do repent, and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, though this Northern Evil should be removed, and vanish, yet the Lord has Plagues in store to punish and be avenged on such a sinful Nation as this.— But let us rouze ourselves at length before it is too late, before the destroying Angel has Commission to direct the Storms that hover all around us, to discharge their Fury upon our devoted Heads. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty Hand of God, and not, like Dissem blers,

blers, draw near him with our Mouth, and honour him with our Lips, when our Hearts are far from him ; let us cleanse and purify these inward Fountains of Corruption, and then will our Outside be clean also : Let every one of us in particular put away his own Abomination, and thereby contribute to a general Reformation.

There is no one that has it not in his Power to put forth a helping Hand, and forward our Deliverance ; let him but pluck from his own Bosom that Enemy of his Country that lurks therein, that Traitor to his King, as well as Rebel to his God, I mean his darling Sin.— And when we have thus demeaned ourselves to him as his People, we may reasonably hope that he will still be our God ; That he will go forth with our Armies, and grant us as signal Deliverances, as any we have heard with our Ears, or which our Fathers have told us of.—We may boldly go forth in the Strength of the Lord God, when we thus make mention of his Righteousness only, when we fly not to Images and Saints for Protection, which cannot save, but to the living God, the Lord of Hosts, and seek to procure his Favour by offering him up the most pleasing of all Sacrifices, that of the Heart.— When we have done this we may repose humble Confidence in his Mercy, and let us then acquit ourselves like Men, in using all those Means that Providence has put in our Power for securing, the Continuance of the most inestimable of Blessings.

Blessings to us, and our Posterity ; as *Englishmen* in defending our civil Laws, and Liberties ; as loyal Subjects, in paying all dutiful Allegiance to that Prince whom not only our most solemn Oaths, but also that most mild, most just Administration which we have so long experienced, engage us to defend and support ; and as good Christians, in asserting and maintaining that Christian Liberty, with which *Christ* hath set us free, and refusing to submit our Consciences to that worst of Yokes, Papal Tyranny.—And lastly, Let us offer up fervent and frequent Prayers to the Throne of Grace ; that God would please to prosper these our Endeavours, that he would strengthen the Hands, and establish the Throne of our sacred Sovereign ; that he would grant him the Hearts and Affections of all his Subjects, defeat the Aims, and confound the Devices of all those that would disturb his and our Peace ; that he would not suffer their wicked Imaginations to prosper, but let them fall in Ruin and Confusion upon their own Heads ; that we, being delivered from the Threats of our Enemies, from Popery and all it's dreadful Consequences, may serve him without Fear, in Righteousness and true Holiness all the Days of our Life.